

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Office action mailed on September 22, 2004. Claims 1-13 and 17-21 are pending in this application. Claims 14-16 have been cancelled previously. Claims 6-13, 19 and 21 are allowed. In the Office Action, Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102, and Claims 1-5, 18 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103. Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections should be withdrawn for at least the reasons set forth below.

At the outset, Applicants have submitted the claims in the proper compliant format according to 37 CFR 1.121. Further, Applicants have submitted a new abstract of the disclosure on a separate sheet in accordance with 37 CFR 1.52(b)(4). No new matter has been introduced by way of the new abstract.

In the Office Action, Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,564,350 to Holmes et al. ("Holmes") or U.S. Patent No. 4,123,207 to Dudley ("Dudley"). Applicants respectfully disagree with and traverse these rejections for the reasons set forth below.

With respect to Claim 17, *Holmes* fails to disclose a die plate comprising a fluid inlet passage and a fluid outlet passage. For example, Figure 3, numbers 76 and 80, are referenced in the Office Action as disclosing a fluid inlet and a fluid outlet passage. However, numbers 76 and 80 are directed to a die assembly housing and not a die plate. See, *Holmes*, column 4, lines 66-70 and column 5, lines 1-8. Similarly, *Dudley* fails to disclose a die plate comprising a fluid inlet passage and a fluid outlet passage according to the claimed invention. For example, Figure 3, numbers 404 and 406, are referenced in the Office Action as disclosing a fluid inlet and a fluid outlet passages. However, numbers 404 and 406 refer to a single passage and not distinct fluid inlet and fluid outlet passages. See, *Dudley*, column 4, lines 8-13. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that *Holmes* and *Dudley* not only fail to disclose the claimed invention, they fail to teach or suggest same.

For the reasons discussed above, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 17 and Claim 18 that depends from Claim 17 are novel and nonobvious over the cited reference. The patentability of Claim 17 renders moot the obviousness rejection of Claim 18. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejections of Claims 17-18 be withdrawn.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-2, 4-5 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over *Holmes* in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,110,523 to Guggiari (“*Guggiari*”) or *Dudley* in view of *Guggiari*. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as being unpatentable over *Holmes* and *Guggiari* in view of U.S. Patent No. 2,764,952 to Meakin (“*Meakin*”) or *Dudley* and *Guggiari* in view of *Meakin*. Applicants believe these rejections are improper for at least the reasons set forth below.

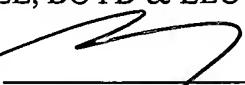
As discussed above, *Holmes* fails to disclose a die plate comprising a fluid inlet passage and a fluid outlet passage. *Guggiari* fails to disclose same. Further, *Dudley* also fails to disclose a die plate comprising a fluid inlet passage and a fluid outlet passage according to the claimed invention. Likewise, *Guggiari* fails to disclose same. As a result, the combination of *Holmes* and *Guggiari* or *Dudley* and *Guggiari* does not teach, suggest, or even disclose the claimed invention, and thus, fails to render the claimed subject matter obvious for at least these reasons. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 1 and 20 and Claims 2-5 that depend from Claim 1 are novel, non-obvious and distinguishable from the cited references. The patentability of Claim 1 renders moot the obviousness rejection of Claim 3.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the obviousness rejections with respect to Claims 1-5 and 20 be reconsidered and the rejection be withdrawn.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the above-identified patent application and earnestly solicit an early allowance of same.

Respectfully submitted,

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